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How to submit a book for *State of the Arts*

To submit a book by a Montana author for inclusion in *State of the Arts*' "About Books" section:

Please send a copy of the book to *Lively Times*, 33651 Eagle Pass Trl., Charlo, MT 59824; or submit the following information electronically to writeus@livelytimes.com or mac@mt.gov:

- Title, author, publisher, publisher's address and month/year published;
- Price and whether it's hard- or softcover;
- A brief description of the book (no more than 200 words), and a short bio of the author;
- A cover image: minimum 200 dpi in pdf, jpg or tiff file;
- If other publications or authors have reviewed the book, send a brief sampling of those remarks.

If you would like us to return the book, include a note with it saying so. (We will pay for shipping.)

E-books: We'll also mention books that are only electronically published: send title, author, a cover image, website for downloads, and a brief paragraph about the book.

Books submitted to *State of the Arts* appear in this publication at the Montana Arts Council's discretion and as space permits, and will not necessarily be reprinted in *Lively Times*.

ABOUT BOOKS

Crime Rib

By Leslie Budewitz

Published July 2014 by Berkley Prime Crime, New York, NY

\$7.99 softcover

Erin Murphy, proprietor of a gourmet food market in Jewel Bay, is determined to put her food-loving town on the map with a nationally televised grill-off, hosted by the suave, arrogant Gib Knox.

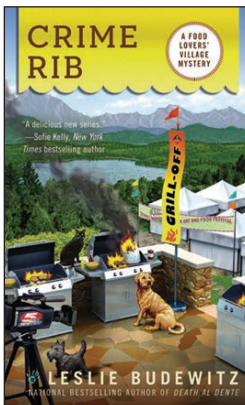
But dead bodies keep interfering in the second installment of Leslie Budewitz's Food Lovers Village Mystery series. First the show's producer is mowed down in an apparent hit-and-run. Next, the "best-known chef in the state" and the big draw at the grill-off is knocked off with a meat tenderizer.

Murphy can't help herself: simmering curiosity and fierce loyalty to her hometown drive her to draw up a Spreadsheet of Suspicion. "I wanted to go back to the Merc and stick my nose in my own business. Sell more handmade pasta and truffles. Spark a run on pemmican bars. Eat a pint of Avalanche Crunch ice cream every day if I felt like it."

But fortunately for readers, it's crime solving that claims her, although recipes do find a home at the back of the book. Sample almond-stuffed baked brie with parsley and fig jam, two-bean and pesto salad, and the huckleberry-morel tenderloin that might have won the grill-off (if not for that pesky murder).

Wondering about the inspiration for Jewel Bay? The author says it's "the hamlets of northwest Montana," but the Old Steel Bridge, Eagle Lake (with its Eagle Lake Monster), and a Summer Food and Art Fair make it sound suspiciously like her hometown of Bigfork.

Budewitz, an attorney, has won two Agatha Awards: the first for *Crooks & Counselors: How to Write Accurately About Criminal Law and Courtroom Procedure*, and the second for last year's *Death al Dente*. Novelist Sofie Kelly dubs her efforts "a delicious new series."



If Not For This

By Peter Fromm

Published August 2014 by Red Hen Press, Pasadena, CA

\$15.95 softcover

Maddy and Dalt call themselves "The Luckies" because their love is so large. "There's no way anything this huge could ever happen again, not in this universe. We've used it up. All the luck."

Well, except the bad luck that inflicts Maddy with multiple sclerosis – a mean disease that gradually steals everything from this strong, vital young river runner, except love.

Author Pete Fromm's new novel generously imagines the life of Dalt and Maddy, drawn together by a passion for each other, and running wild rivers. They get married on the banks of the Buffalo Fork River in Wyoming, and promptly set off downstream. As the raft begins to drift, Maddy reflects on "how much like marriage this is. Wondering who is steering, how we're ever going to get around all those wicked-ass snags, what's going to keep us from beaching on those long, gray, dry gravel bars."

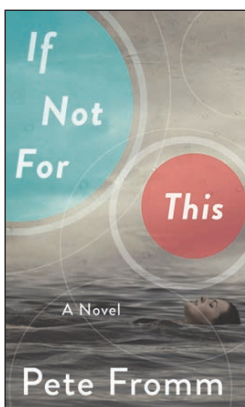
MS, which shows up first as a long spate of fatigue, diagnosed as mono, is about as "wicked-ass" as it gets. Maddy still conceives and bears two healthy children, with each pregnancy offering a brief respite from symptoms.

But the toll on her life and health is inexorable. They relinquish their dream business – Half Moon Whitewater – and move to a bungalow in town, where Dalt becomes a contractor so they can pay the rising medical bills.

Fromm, who has always had a knack for plumbing the interior lives of eccentric characters, places readers in the head and heart of a funny, brave woman as she navigates this terrifying run down a brutal river. It's a story imbued with such honesty, courage and kindness that we can only hope for someone, somewhere, it's true.

"A terrific novel, poignant as hell, but feisty, funny and romantic too," writes novelist Jess Walter.

Fromm has written 10 books, including the novel *As Cool As I Am*, which was made into a movie, and a memoir, *Indian Creek Chronicles*.



– Kristi Niemeyer

Life on the Rocks, A Portrait of the American Mountain Goat

By Bruce L. Smith

Published 2014 by University Press of Colorado, Boulder, CO

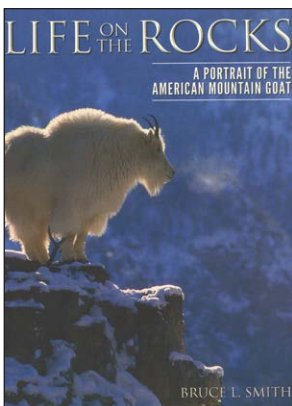
\$34.95 hardcover

"Perhaps the most extraordinary mountaineer to ever live" is how wildlife biologist and photographer Bruce Smith describes the subject of this beautiful and informative book on North America's most elusive species of hoofed mammals, the mountain goat.

The author first became interested in these magnificent animals as a student at The University of Montana in the 1970s, and subsequently spent three winters and springs in the Bitterroot Mountains, observing and photographing goats for a graduate degree program. His career in wildlife management involved the study of other species, but his affection for, and interest in, mountain goats never left him.

Smith covers anatomy, reproduction, diet, defenses, range, social hierarchy, adaptability, and more. His photography lends an informative complement to the narrative, with several incredible shots of goats situated precariously on ledges, and nannies sheltering their kids from curious onlookers.

Often, Smith expresses his admiration for the goats' tenacity and skill to



navigate and survive in the harsh environment to which they are uniquely adapted. The sight of an adult goat in a snow-white winter coat, backlit by sun on a mountain ledge, is an image not easily forgotten.

Smith devotes the latter part of his book to concerns about habitat management, including increasing human access to goats' high-mountain terrain and changing climate conditions. He suggests that careful monitoring of herd populations and responsible stewardship are necessary to ensuring that these alpine athletes will continue to awe and delight those lucky enough to encounter them in our parks, forests and wilderness preserves.

Smith is a veteran wildlife manager and scientist of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He previously authored three other books, including *Where Elk Roam*, for which he was awarded the 2012 Montana Book Award.

– Judy Shafter

Fourth of July Creek

By Smith Henderson

Published 2014 by ecco:HarperCollins Publishers, New York, NY

\$26.99 hardcover

Pete Snow is not your typical social worker. "We're usually women," he tells a policeman at the scene of a domestic disturbance where he's been summoned to check on the family.

His long hair, faded clothing and thin frame don't initially command respect, but his heart is the genuine article. When an almost feral boy of 11 appears, seemingly out of nowhere, in a schoolyard in a small northwest Montana town, Pete is sent to investigate. He finds a "profoundly disturbed father," fundamentalist Jeremiah Pearl.

Pete's initial attempts to help them with clothing and food are rebuffed. With caution and patience, he is gradually allowed into their realm, albeit with full knowledge that his life is in danger when he's with them.

Pete's personal life is in such disarray that he could use a social worker himself. He drinks too much, is estranged from his wife, his teenage daughter has disappeared, and there are tough cases in his workload that won't go away.

When Pete's association with the reclusive father and son comes to the attention of the FBI, events unfold rapidly into a frantic manhunt. No one emerges unscathed in this powerful novel that lays bare the complexities of love, trust, abandonment, and personal freedom.

Henderson's writing is frank and unflinching. Many of his characters live in violent and disturbing environments, and he does not spare the adjectives to describe them. Benjamin is "a white boy with purple and brown bruises and dirt and pink scar tissue and all those jaundiced whorls, all of the colors so faint in the whelming whiteness of him." And his ominous father is a self-described "bringer of bad tidings."

New York Times reviewer Jonathan Miles compares the writing to Cormac McCarthy's, "but the story this prose conveys, and the manner in which Henderson unfurls it, bears its own unalloyed power." And the *Washington Post* praises it as "simultaneously intimate and grand, written in a style athletic enough to capture a spectacular range of harrowing events."

Henderson is a Montana native, currently living in Portland, OR. In 2011 he received both a PEN Emerging Writers Award in fiction and a Pushcart Prize. His work has appeared in several publications, including *American Short Fiction*, *One Story*, and *New Orleans Review*.

The Home Place

By Carrie La Seur

Published July 2014 by William Morrow, New York, NY

\$25.99 hardcover

Reluctantly, high-powered Seattle lawyer Alma Terrebonne returns to Billings, summoned by bad news. Her younger sister, Vicky, was found frozen in someone's front yard during a cold snap so harsh "it sounds like wolves and reverberates like drums in all the hollow places ..."

While trying to decipher the cause of her sister's death, she plummets into guilt-laced memory of the car crash that killed both parents and maimed her sister. And her own decision to leave town on a scholarship, earn a law degree at Yale, and stay away for good.

Although Vicky's death appears to have been caused by a fall and exposure to sub-zero temperatures, an autopsy raises questions. Alma is determined to find answers, while trying to calm Vicky's 11-year-old daughter, fragile from seeing her mother's dead body shoved into an ambulance.

During the six-day trajectory of the novel, she reconnects with her brother, who runs a downtown coffeehouse, and her grandmother, whose "slow, John Wayne cadence ... speaks of place almost as much as the place itself, not the word but the land made flesh."

She also confronts her volatile uncle and passive aunt, who raised Vicky after their parents died, and evicts a meth dealer who is occupying "the Home Place," the ranch that's been in their family for generations. Her car is run off the road by a devious land agent, trying to coerce local ranchers into selling their mineral rights; and sparks flare up with her first love, a handsome cowboy who has returned to his family's ranch.

From the beginning, Alma senses there are family secrets "beyond her capacity to survive," and that her own "cultivated control is black, groaning ice underfoot."

Like her protagonist, author Carrie La Seur graduated from Yale with a law degree (she's also a Rhodes Scholar with a doctorate in modern languages). She deftly and convincingly negotiates the sinuous plot, while evoking a living landscape: "the safe haven, the convergence of waters, the place where the beloved dead are as real as the living."

"Walloping in suspense, drama, rage, and remorse, this debut is an accomplished literary novel of the New West," writes *Library Journal*. La Seur, whose own roots in Montana date back to the 1860s, is now an energy and environmental lawyer in Billings.

– Kristi Niemeyer

